



# PRESS RELEASE

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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### **Check Casher Indicted for Role in Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Scheme**

A federal grand jury sitting in Macon, Georgia returned an indictment against a Columbus, Georgia resident on Nov. 9, which was unsealed today, for her role in a stolen identity refund fraud conspiracy, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciraolo, head of the Justice Department's Tax Division, and U.S. Attorney G.F. Peterman III for the Middle District of Georgia.

According to the indictment, throughout 2013, Shade Bakare cashed fraudulently obtained tax refund checks at the request of several individuals, including co-conspirators Tracy and Dameisha Mitchell, in exchange for a fee. Bakare endorsed several of the checks, and cashed many of the checks at Big O's Package Store located in Columbus, Georgia. Bakare provided the cash, minus the fee she charged, to Dameisha Mitchell and others. In addition to cashing these refund checks, Bakare filed fraudulent tax returns using stolen identities. Bakare obtained an Electronic Filing Identification Number from co-conspirator Danielle Wallace and used it to file fraudulent tax returns. Bakare directed the tax refunds to financial institutions which issued the refunds via check. Bakare and others cashed those checks at various locations, including Big O's Package Store.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted, Bakare faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy count, 10 years in prison for each theft of public funds count, 20 years in prison for each wire fraud count, and a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison for aggravated identity theft. Bakare also faces a period of supervised release and monetary penalties.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Ciraolo and U.S. Attorney Peterman commended special agents of Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service, who conducted the investigation, and Trial Attorney Michael C. Boteler of the Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Melvin Hyde of the Middle District of Georgia, who are prosecuting the case.

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